

detroit symphony

detroit symphony orchestra 1973-1974 season ann arbor, sept. 30



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(Founded 1914)

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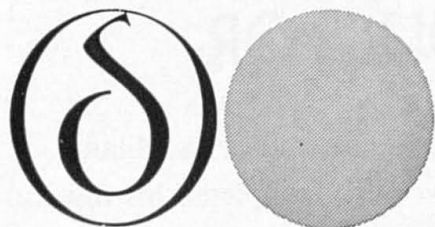
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HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR



detroit symphony

Sunday afternoon, September 30 at 2:30

Aldo Ceccato, *conductor*

FRANCO GULLI, *violinist*

de SABATA **Juventus, Symphonic Poem**

PAGANINI **Concerto No. 2 for Violin and Orchestra,
B minor, Opus 7**

Allegro maestoso

Adagio

Rondo: Andantino allegretto moderato

FRANCO GULLI

INTERMISSION

SHOSTAKOVICH **Symphony No. 1, F minor, Opus 10**

Allegretto — Allegro non troppo

Allegro

Lento —

Allegro molto

The Steinway is the official piano of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra

This afternoon marks the Orchestra's fifty-first appearance in Hill Auditorium

OUR PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR



After his initial studies in Milan, ALDO CECCATO completed his musical training at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin and at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena. A successful European career began immediately, with appearances at La Scala, Covent Garden, Glyndebourne, and the Edinburgh Festival, conducting all the important European orchestras. His North American debut took place with the Lyric Opera of Chicago in 1969, and his extraordinary success there catapulted him virtually overnight into being one of the most sought-after guest conductors among the major American orchestras. He has conducted scores of concerts with each of them, including the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Philadelphia Orchestra, and has been repeatedly invited back. He is also a best-selling artist on records, as his recording of *La Traviata* bears witness.

Maestro Ceccato was appointed Principal Conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in May of 1972, effective with the 1973-74 season. He is married to the former Eliana de Sabata, daughter of the famous conductor Victor de Sabata, and they have two young sons, Cristiano and Francesco.

PROGRAM NOTES

by *Robert Holmes*

Dean, College of Fine Arts, Western Michigan University

JUVENTUS, SYMPHONIC POEM VICTOR DE SABATA

Born Trieste, 1892; died Santa Margherita Ligure, 1967

De Sabata completed this composition in 1919 • The first performance took place at the Teatro del Popolo in Milan on May 25, 1919; Toscanini conducted.

The first performance in the United States took place in Chicago on November 5, 1920; Frederick Stock conducted the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

The work has been performed once before in this series, on February 14, 1935; Victor Kolar conducted.

The score calls for 2 flutes and piccolo, 2 oboes and English horn, 2 clarinets and bass clarinet, 2 bassoons and contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 4 trombones, 4 timpani, triangle, side drum, bass drum, cymbals, gong, glockenspiel, 2 harps, celeste, and strings.

Victor de Sabata conducted *Juventus* several times in the United States during the twenties and thirties. For a performance with the Cincinnati Symphony in November, 1927, he wrote the following annotation:

“In the Symphonic Poem *Juventus*, the composer wished to depict the *élan* and the impetuous desires of youth: its restless dreams of conquest, its bold march toward the light of joy and of dominion, — and all the dazzling chimeras that call in the heart of every man . . .

“But to feverish exaltation succeeds depression, dull, listless. At the first shock of the wretched realities of the life of every day the triumphal dream falters, hesitates, — and vanishes. Mortal gloom descends upon the soul, which weeps, bereft of hope. The songs of the Ideal are transmuted now into mocking laughter and into funeral knell. Silence envelops all, annihilation that it seems must endure forever . . .

“But behold, of a sudden, the resilience of youth, revived by the fervor of its own blood, still rich in all its untouched strength. It believes, it hopes again, — risen anew, stronger for all the adversity and all the bitterness . . . And intoxicated it flies once more to the conquest of life!”

He then illustrated the six principal subjects with their descriptive titles: ‘Youth’s Vigor,’ ‘The Conquest of Life,’ ‘Aspiration,’ ‘Joyous March,’ ‘Toward the Ideal,’ and ‘Love.’

The same program book included the following analysis by James G. Heller. One might assume that it had the composer’s authorization.

“The poem begins *Allegro impetuoso* with great decision and force, leading at once into a rugged theme for strings in unison. This dies away with reminiscences of the opening measures. Soft syncopated chords for woodwinds follow, then a brief snatch of song in violins, then woodwinds. A sudden climax

DETROIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
CONCERT CALENDAR FOR THE COMING WEEKS

Thursday evening, October 4 at 8:30

Saturday evening, October 6 at 8:30

SAMUEL JONES, conducting

JOHN BROWNING, pianist

BEETHOVEN	Leonore Overture No. 3
PROKOFIEV	Piano Concerto No. 2
MOZART	Symphony No. 34
BARTOK	"Miraculous Mandarin" Suite

Sunday afternoon, October 7 at 3:30 (Kresge "Omnibus" Family Concert)

ARTHUR FIEDLER, conducting

RICHARD ROBERTS, violinist

HANDEL	Water Music
BRUCH	Scottish Fantasy
WEBER	Overture to "Euryanthe"
RODGERS and HAMMERSTEIN	Excerpts from "The Sound of Music"
arr. MILLER	Song of the Volga Boatmen
KING	I feel the earth move

Thursday evening, October 11 at 8:30

Friday morning, October 12 at 10:45 (NBD Coffee Concert)

RAFAEL FRÜHBECK de BURGOS, conducting

HORACIO GUTIERREZ, pianist

GLINKA	Overture to "Russlan and Ludmila"
RACHMANINOFF	Piano Concerto No. 2
STRAVINSKY	"Petrushka" Suite
RAVEL	Bolero

Saturday morning, October 13 at 11 o'clock

Saturday afternoon, October 13 at 2 o'clock

Young People's Concerts

SAMUEL JONES, conducting

BRITTEN	Storm Music, from "Peter Grimes"
HOVHANESS	And God Created Great Whales
IVES	The Ruined River
IVES	Like a Sick Eagle
THOMSON	Desolation, from "The Plow that Broke the Plains"
DUKAS	The Sorcerer's Apprentice
COPLAND	The Promise of Living, from "The Tender Land"
WARD	America the Beautiful

PROGRAM NOTES — *continued*

introduces a powerful melody for horns and trombone. The preceding melodies are sung again, now in the fuller tones of violas and 'cellos. The passion of the opening measures returns, culminating in a final enunciation of the main theme by all strings except contrabasses. But the triumph is short-lived, and brass bray discordant and shrill chords. A few broad strains for strings, dying, dying, and then a new section, *Moderato molto*.

"The mood is now softer and more contemplative. First violins sing softly but with lyric fervor. Woodwinds continue the song, against fuller orchestration, then strings again. From voice to voice it leaps in rising exaltation and beauty, faster and faster, until calm once more ensues. For some measures peace, tranquil and even somewhat languid, spreads over all. In gasps between the calm measures, the power and frenzy of the main theme burst forth. It is as though a lethargy had descended upon the energy and wild dreams of youth, as though youth were struggling to throw off the chains.

"After a last furious effort comes sadness, *Andante sostenutissimo*. Horns, trombones seem to groan. Woodwinds and strings sink in downward sighing thirds. There is despair and gloom. Softly between sounds the peaceful melody. And thus for some minutes alternate gloom, frenzy, and hope. At last, when the sounds sink almost to silence, and the dull tones of the kettle-drums throb sullenly, the wild strength of the opening of the poem is recapitulated. The repetition is substantially accurate, with some development of the themes, until the orchestra whips itself into the full storm of its force, and to the clatter of all the percussion shrills to its end."

The Straussian program will be obvious to all. It should also be pointed out, however, that Strauss himself thought well of this work and conducted it on more than one occasion.

Mr. Ceccato conducted performances of this composition with the Cleveland Orchestra in January, 1972. On that occasion Klaus G. Roy, that orchestra's superb annotator, wrote the following comprehensive biography of the composer:

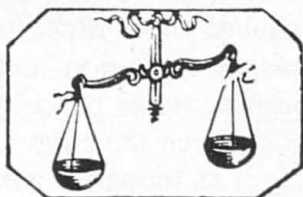
"Victor de Sabata was so outstanding a conductor that his accomplishment as a composer has become overshadowed and neglected. We are indebted to Aldo Ceccato for bringing us an example of the extensive creative work by the man who encouraged his early career and later became his father-in-law.

"De Sabata played the piano at four and composed at six. At nine he entered the Milan Conservatory and studied with Saladino and Orefice; at his graduation, he won the school's gold medal. He then became conductor of the Monte Carlo Opera and conducted symphony concerts in the major Italian cities as well as in Brussels and Warsaw. In 1927 he was engaged as the chief conductor of La Scala, Milan, whose opera performances under his direction gained for him world renown. In the same year, de Sabata made his U.S. debut with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, where he was listed as regular guest conductor; he subsequently visited the United States several times. He was especially active in England, appearing at Covent Garden, London, and at the Edinburgh Festival. He appeared as guest conductor in Vienna, Berlin, Bayreuth, Stockholm, and other European capitals, both in opera and in concert. As a conductor of

NEW! ZODIAC CONCERTS

Friday evenings at 8:30

A symphonic adventure designed especially with students, mods, singles and the under-30 crowd in mind. This series will be presented in a casual, informal setting — and the audience will be welcome backstage for a visit after each performance. Concert hour remains 8:30 . . . however, as a special added Zodiac attraction, a 7:30 Prelude will be offered before each program



October 19

Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos,
conducting

Enrique Perez de Guzman, pianist

Ruth Welting, soprano

Michael Best, tenor

Peter Binder, baritone

University of Michigan Choir

Boy Choir of Christ Church, Episcopal,
Grosse Pointe

Falla Nights in the Gardens of Spain
Orff Carmina Burana

Prelude: 7:30

"The Art of Spanish Piano"

Enrique Perez de Guzman

Montsalvatge Sonatina para Ivette
Granados 3 Goyescas



November 23

Paul Freeman, conducting

Sanford Allen, violinist

St. Georges Sinfonie No. 1 in G

Cordero Violin Concerto

Respighi Ancient Airs and Dances

Barber Medea's Dance of Vengeance

Prelude: 7:30

"The Black Influence on
Symphonic Music"

Panelists: **Josephine Harreld Love,**
Your Heritage House

Dr. Dominique Rene deLerma,
musicologist

Roque Cordero, composer



January 18

Erich Kunzel and

Don Th. Jaeger, conducting

Dave Brubeck & Sons

New Heavenly Blue

Charlene Peterson, soprano

University of Michigan Choral Union

Brubeck Program including:

Fugal Fanfare

Brandenburg Gate: Variation for Jazz

Combo, Strings and Horn

Three Excerpts from oratorio

"The Light in the Wilderness"

"Out of the Way of the People"

"Truth" and selections by

Dave, Darius, Chris & Dan Brubeck

Prelude: 7:30

"Jazz in Art" **Dave Brubeck**



April 5

Aldo Ceccato, conductor

Michele Campanella, pianist

Stravinsky Symphony No. 1

Bartok Piano Concerto No. 3

Ravel

Rapsodie espagnole

Prelude: 7:30

String Quartet by Claude Debussy

Performed by members of the
Detroit Symphony Orchestra:

Bogos Mortchikian, violin;

James Waring, violin; **David Ireland,**
viola; and **Mario DiFiore,** cello.

Season tickets for all four concerts are available at the Ford Auditorium Box Office at \$10, \$15, and \$20. Student subscriptions half price.

Young People's Concerts

4 Super Saturdays



Earlybird Series at 11 a.m.

Lazybird Series at 2 p.m.

1

ECOLOGY IN MUSIC
OCTOBER 13
SAM JONES conducting

Opening concert of the series raises the ecology flag through a musical program paying tribute to nature and the world around us.

3

AN ORCHESTRAL ODYSSEY
FEBRUARY 23
MICHAEL PALMER conducting

A musical exploration of the Orchestra's various choirs and how they interrelate to produce symphonic sound.

2

NUTCRACKER BALLET
DETROIT SEVERO BALLET COMPANY
DECEMBER 8
SAM JONES conducting

A Christmas sugar plum treat: Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" in a sparkling production staged by Sandra Severo's famous ballet company.

4

SESAME ST

BOB McGRATH SHOW
MARCH 30
PAUL FREEMAN conducting

The delightful songs of TV's "Sesame Street" will be presented at an in-person concert appearance by the show's super-popular host.

Season tickets for all four concerts are available at the Ford Auditorium Box Office at \$4, \$6, and \$8.

PROGRAM NOTES — *continued*

Verdi's operas and the *Requiem* he was often compared with Toscanini, but his performances of Beethoven's symphonies and the *Missa Solemnis* were also regarded as extraordinary.

"At 17, when still a student, de Sabata made a name for himself with his *Suite for Orchestra*, conducted by Tullio Serafin at La Scala. Guido Gatti writes in *Grove's* that this early work was 'already to a great extent free of scholastic rules and admirably constructed' and showed 'signs of the influence of German romanticism and especially of Richard Strauss. These traits became even more strongly marked, as regards melodic material, orchestration and general conception on programmatic lines, in the symphonic poems *Juventus* (1919), *La notte di Platon* (1924) and *Gethsemani* (1925) which were successfully performed.' There are also an opera of 1917 and a ballet of 1931, as well as incidental music to Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. Several of his works have been heard in the United States, performed by the orchestras of New York, Cincinnati, Chicago, and Minneapolis [and Detroit]. When Toscanini brought the La Scala Orchestra to the U.S. for a tour in 1925, he performed *Juventus* numerous times. As a personal sidelight, it can be reported that Mr. Ceccato's direction of the work in Rome in 1966 was the occasion of his meeting de Sabata's daughter, Eliana — whom he married a few months later."

CONCERTO NO. 2 FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA,

B MINOR, OPUS 7 NICCOLO PAGANINI

Born Genoa, 1782; died Nice, 1840

Paganini composed his Second Violin Concerto in 1826 • The first performance probably took place in Naples at the Teatro San Carlo early in 1827; the composer was the soloist.

This is the first performance in this series.

The score calls for 1 flute, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, and strings.

Like all of Paganini's concertos, it was published posthumously, in 1851.

Paganini was the greatest of all musical showmen. He was not above, for example, using frayed strings so that one or two might snap during a concert, thus forcing him to play the remaining passages on two or three strings. Nor did he hesitate to write a concerto in F-sharp, a difficult key for stringed instruments, and then tuning his own instrument up or down a half-step so that he himself played the solo part in an easier key. Further, he was never known to practice between concerts and he referred mysteriously to a "secret" by which he had acquired and maintained his technique. No one ever set eyes on the scores of his solo parts during his lifetime and he did not allow publication of most of his works until after his death. He never played a cadenza at a rehearsal for fear that musicians might discover some of his tricks, and he refused to talk about his music. To crown everything, he left the concert stage suddenly while still at the peak of his powers, returning only on rare occasions to play for charitable causes.

Some claimed that he had entered into a pact with Satan, who was believed to hover backstage every time he played. He did nothing to dispel the association. He himself looked like a skeleton, as tall and skinny as one could imagine, with jet black eyes and hair, and a hawk nose, and phenomenally long fingers. He looked like a veritable apparition. All of which was good box office.

But he was a good deal more than a charlatan; Paganini was unquestionably the greatest violinist, and quite possibly (except for Liszt) the greatest virtuoso on any instrument who ever lived. He brought violin technique to an unsurpassable peak of development. Running octaves, left-hand pizzicato, artificial harmonics, all types of bowing, double, triple, and quadruple stops, while not all his own innovations, were developed to a point never known before.

As a result he astonished everyone, including the greatest musicians of his era. For Mendelssohn and Moscheles words could not be found to describe his genius. Indeed, Moscheles, a great piano virtuoso, claimed he was so bewildered that for several days afterwards his head seemed to be on fire and his brain reeled. Liszt, not one to praise other virtuosos, said that one could not believe unless one had heard it. And he wrote from Paris: "What a man, what a fiddler, what an artist! Heavens! What suffering and misery, what tortures dwell in those four strings."

Goethe said: "His trills are clouds of incense." Heine captured an unforgettable impression of Paganini's appearance in his *Florentine Nights*. Meyerbeer concluded: "Where our reason ends, there Paganini begins." It is said that the same composer was so enthralled with Paganini's playing that he followed him from town to town and could not go to the opening of one of his own operas until he had heard 18 of the concerts.

Finally, it is significant that Paganini's playing moved everyone, artist and peasant alike. Stephen Stratton, an early Paganini biographer, wrote: "Most virtuosos play for the learned, but his playing was understood by businessmen and scholars, by children and grownups alike. It was felt and loved by all. This," Stratton added, "is the distinctive characteristic of all that is great in music."

Paganini's violin concertos served as the showcase for his virtuosity; and all of the techniques and characteristics just mentioned are evident here. There are three movements: *Allegro maestoso*, B minor, 12/8; *Adagio*, D major, 4/4; *Rondo "La Campanella"*, B minor, 6/8. The opening movement is dramatic in nature: its themes and mood might well have found an operatic framework at the hands of another composer. The middle movement is no less theatrical but is a reasonably serene cantabile. The Finale presents the well-known "La Campanella" theme and in format is a typical, academic rondo. The soloist is hyperactive throughout.

Like other writers, this annotator is not immune to clichés, and one of the most common in writing about concertos is, for example: "Although this work offers sufficient opportunity for the soloist to demonstrate his virtuosic capabilities, it is not at the expense of genuine musical substance, for this concerto, etc., etc. . . ." or: "Despite the gratifying solo part, this concerto remains one of the most respected, etc., etc." With this Paganini concerto, the converse is true, and it is good to lay it out in the open: vis-a-vis the art of musical composition, the superficiality and histrionics of this composition will be easily recognized by all. But that's not the point. The point is that this is an opportunity to hear and

THIS WEEK'S SOLOIST



FRANCO GULLI makes his debut appearances with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra at these concerts. He was born in Trieste and was well known to Americans through his recordings before he made his first tour of this country in 1968-9. Recognized as one of the great artists in Europe, he has scored triumphs with every major orchestra in Europe, the Soviet Union, and the Orient. Although he specializes in the classical and early romantic repertory (he gave the 20th-century première of Paganini's Fifth Concerto, playing Paganini's own Guarnerius), one of his more intriguing discs is in fact a recording of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* — with the Angelicum Orchestra of Milan under Aldo Ceccato.

Mr. Gulli lives in Milan with his wife, pianist Enrica Cavallo, with whom he regularly appears in recital; audiences at the University of Michigan and at Michigan State have been among those privileged to hear them.

LECTURE / OPEN REHEARSALS

Three Wednesday afternoons at 1 o'clock

Presented under auspices of the

Junior Women's Association for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra

November 14: STANISLAW SKROWACZEWSKI, *conducting*
MAYUMI FUJIKAWA, *violinist*

February 27: ANDRÉ PREVIN, *conducting*

April 13: ALDO CECCATO, *conductor*
MICHELE CAMPANELLA, *pianist*

Each Open Rehearsal (beginning at 2 p.m.) is preceded by an explanatory lecture (beginning at 1 p.m.) given by Mrs. Robert Kaiser. Tickets are \$2 per person (\$1 for students and senior citizens) for each afternoon, available by writing Lecture/Open Rehearsals, 899 Briarcliff Rd., Grosse Pointe 48236. Series ticket, \$5. Group discounts available (phone 823-2144).

Proceeds to Orchestra Supplemental Pension Plan

PROGRAM NOTES — *continued*

watch an eminent violinist accept one of the greatest technical challenges available to him. It should be experienced as such — an opportunity to witness a technical/musical feat, a conquest, a marvelous example of what commitment, hard work, and talent are capable of achieving.

SYMPHONY NO. 1, F MINOR, OPUS 10 DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH Born St. Petersburg, 1906

Shostakovich began his First Symphony in 1924 and completed it in 1925 • The first performance took place in Leningrad on May 12, 1926; Nikolai Malko conducted the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra • The first performance outside the Soviet Union was directed by Bruno Walter in Berlin in November, 1927 • The American première was presented by Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra a year later.

First performance in this series: November 18, 1943; Karl Krueger conducted • Last performance in this series: January 29, 1970; Thomas Schippers conducted.

The score calls for 2 flutes and piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones and tuba, timpani, triangle, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, piano, and strings.

Little “Mitya” Shostakovich led a cultured and sheltered life at first. His father was a successful chemical engineer and his mother was a capable pianist who had studied at the Petersburg Conservatory. As the son of upper-class intellectuals, he attended an exclusive private school, started studying piano at the age of 13, enrolled in the Leningrad Conservatory, studying composition with Glazunov and Maximilian Steinberg. But the Bolshevik Revolution and his father’s sudden death changed things, drastically and tragically.

He, his mother, and his two sisters were forced to move to a small slum flat in Leningrad, and Madame Shostakovich began working, when she could, as a stenographer to try to keep her children clothed and fed. They were often cold and more often hungry. And by the time the sensitive Mitya had turned 18, his health was so affected that tuberculosis appeared inevitable and he was sent to a sanitarium.

He responded to treatment. Upon returning, they were poorer than ever and even lost their beloved piano to bill collectors. But, resolved to continue his music education at any cost, the young genius took a job playing the piano in a movie theatre. Seroff describes his situation.

“Down in front below the screen sat Mitya, his back soaked with perspiration, his near-sighted eyes in their horn-rimmed glasses peering upwards to follow the story, his fingers pounding away on the raucous upright piano. Late at night he trudged home in a thin coat and summer cap, with no warm gloves or galoshes, and arrived exhausted around one o’clock in the morning . . . It was in the midst of this that Mitya began composing his First Symphony.”

The First Symphony is, then, the work of a gifted teen-ager, completed when he was but 19, as a kind of graduation thesis from the conservatory.

FIRST KRESGE "OMNIBUS" FAMILY CONCERT

Arthur Fiedler will conduct the Detroit Symphony Orchestra at the first concert of this season's new Kresge "Omnibus" Family Series next Sunday afternoon, October 7, at 3:30. Richard Roberts, one of our new Associate Concertmasters, will make his Detroit Symphony Orchestra debut, performing Bruch's Scottish Fantasy, and the program — in the favorite Fiedler "Pops" style — will include Handel's Water Music, the overture to Weber's *Euryanthe*, excerpts from *The Sound of Music*, and Carole King's "I feel the earth move."



ARTHUR FIEDLER's conducting career has taken him to all corners of North America, and he has conducted orchestras in five of the other six continents as well. In his hometown of Boston he is a revered institution. In 1915, as a 21-year-old violinist, he joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Karl Muck. His urge to conduct led him in 1924 to form the Boston Sinfonietta, a chamber orchestra composed of his colleagues. In 1929, he launched the first of the now famous Esplanade Concerts. He showed such ability in attracting and holding the interest of huge throngs that he was appointed the 18th conductor of the Boston Pops Concerts in the following year. Fiedler has been a regular visitor to the Detroit Symphony "Pops" each year since 1967.



Violinist RICHARD ROBERTS comes to us from two years with the Toronto Symphony. A native of Minneapolis, he studied first with Norman Carol, now concertmaster of the Philadelphia Orchestra, and then attended Indiana University, where his teacher was Josef Gingold, former concertmaster of the Detroit Symphony. He then joined the Minnesota Orchestra and soloed with them several times. In 1970 he studied with Henryk Szeryng in Geneva.

PROGRAM NOTES — *continued*

And, though it may seem curious, considering both socialist ideology and the fact that we are dealing with the arts, the composition symbolizes the classic transformation from suffering artist to celebrity, a kind of *proletkult* Horatio Alger story.

The conservatory administration decided to support their young genius, and paid to have the parts of the symphony copied; probably through the encouragement of Steinberg, Nikolai Malko agreed to conduct the composition with the Leningrad Philharmonic. It received a tremendous ovation, and Mitya (now Dmitri) became something of an instant folk hero. Subsequently, Bruno Walter heard about the “miracle” and produced the symphony in Berlin, thereby starting Shostakovich’s Western fame; shortly thereafter the American première was presented by the Philadelphia Orchestra. Thus, within two years, the starving silent film piano player became an international figure, the Mozart of socialist realism, the very embodiment of Lenin’s artist-hero.

The First Symphony is eclectic. There are evidences of the influence of Glazunov, Prokofiev, and even Tchaikovsky. Further, we know that Hindemith had been in Leningrad and his music as well as that of Mahler, Berg, and Stravinsky was certainly not unknown there, and their influences might also be detected. Yet the work has distinctive qualities which were to become Shostakovich trademarks: the epochal concept; the Mahlerian contradictions with a Dostoevskian tone; the loftiness beside peasant vulgarity; romantic desolation mixed with delightfully naive humor, as well as with relentless logic; and beyond all, the one trait that was to save his symphonies time and again from political polemics though not always from obtuse mundanity: a simplistic nationalism. It is an incredible first symphony. It is, perhaps, Shostakovich at his purest, for his muse was still exempt from political doctrine.

Following is the most recent interview by an American with Dmitri Shostakovich. This interview, by Stephen Rubin, appeared in *The New York Times* on June 24, 1973.

“Overpowering tension emanates from Dmitri Shostakovich, charging the atmosphere with wildly alternating currents. The 66-year-old Russian musician, perhaps the world’s greatest living composer, apparently wants to be polite, patient and even sporting. But nerves override his good intentions.

“Pale and sickly-looking, Shostakovich has a frail body, visibly scarred from years of illnesses, which cannot withstand much actual physical movement. Yet he is consumed by pent-up energy which is unleashed in a series of continuous twitches and tics. His right hand, which seems partially paralyzed, is clenched in a tight fist. In contrast, his left hand gesticulates every which way — pushing at his unusually thick and heavy glasses, pulling at his suspenders, plucking at his tie, and patting his sparse gray hair.

“The composer’s staccato, breathless and impassioned manner of speaking coordinates perfectly with his quirky bearing. He rarely smiles, and his quivering lips appear permanently drawn in an unhappy frown. When talking, he tends not to look in the listener’s eye, and therefore seems remote. He is an imposing figure, yes, in a frighteningly intense way.

PROGRAM NOTES — *continued*

“Shostakovich has obviously learned his lessons well. Six years ago he became the first composer to be awarded the Soviet Union’s highest title, Hero of Socialist Labor. In no way does he play the part externally — his manner is extraordinarily modest — but when it comes to speaking in generalities, to saying the ‘right things,’ then he is indeed heroic.

“The musician came to New York on the Soviet liner Mikhail Lermontov, accompanied by his wife, Irina. He was on his way to Evanston, Illinois, to receive an honorary doctorate of fine arts from Northwestern University on June 16. The week-long trip was his first to the United States since 1959. Considering his poor health, he was remarkably active. As well as sightseeing and attending luncheons in his honor, a visit to the Met to hear *Aida* and a look at the opening Rug Concert of the New York Philharmonic were on the agenda for his first two evenings here.

“He had initially declined interviews. But with the help of the State Department and Vladimir Orlov, a cultural secretary with the Russian Embassy in Washington, an exclusive meeting with the composer was arranged. There was little of the usual red tape. The State Department did politely warn, ‘Only questions regarding music, please,’ but that was the extent of the briefing. All Mr. Orlov had to say was that Shostakovich could only spare a half hour at 9:30 in the morning.

“The composer himself opens the door to his St. Moritz suite, mumbling amenities in Russian. I am quickly introduced to Mrs. Shostakovich, who then disappears into the bedroom. The interview commences with the subject enthroned on two sofa cushions. Shostakovich speaks little English and talks through his American interpreter/escort, Professor Alexander Dunkel of New York University. Orlov often assists with the translating but never in any way prompts his comrade.

“In answering questions, Shostakovich tends to be brief, formal, innocuous and particularly at odds with queries of a personal nature. ‘I am unable to characterize myself,’ he says flatly.

“He is more comfortable chronicling the advantages for a composer of working under a socialist system. ‘In our country,’ he says, ‘they are very concerned with our everyday life as well as our creative works. An organization called the Musical Fund has perhaps two dozen homes where composers can write their works and can receive separate dwellings. No one interferes with them and they don’t bother anyone, either. There are such houses in the Crimea, Caucasus, Siberia, Leningrad and the suburbs of Moscow. They are very convenient and comfortable. This is the most valuable thing we get.

“Of course, we get other everyday things too, like the apartment. If a young beginning composer has to buy a piano, he can be aided materially in purchasing it on the installment plan or in renting it. Our responsibility as Soviet composers is to justify the faith they have in us. It would be a sin to write bad music.’

“Are there any disadvantages for the composer working under a socialist system? ‘Nyet.’

“Shostakovich explains how a Soviet composer earns his living. ‘Each composer who has written a worthy work which deserves the attention of the

listener is paid for the work of having composed the piece by the state, the Ministry of Culture. Then if it's published, the publishing firm also pays him royalties. Finally, if the work is performed publicly, he receives a specific percentage — I don't remember what it is — from the proceeds of the concert. In general, the work of composers is well paid for.

“Works are either commissioned or written on the initiative of the composer. For many years, I didn't write commissioned works out of fear of not completing them, but at one time I did write them. Many composers today write commissioned works if the commissions are interesting and in line with their creative drives.”

“Shostakovich is dressed, startlingly, in a Western-looking getup: brown sports jacket, brown slacks, a bold, box-print brown and white shirt, and a patterned tie of various hues that doesn't match. Since he seems perpetually ill at ease, it is difficult to judge what topics of conversation please or displease him.

“In the United States, Shostakovich is a popular, much-played composer. If he lived here, he'd be something of a celebrity. Does he have similar status in the Soviet Union? ‘Our composers are treated with great respect. But this star business is exaggerated. Each composer should be a humble and intelligent person in the best sense of those words. If he's a star, with his nose pointed to the sky, this is not good for the composer or his public. My basic purpose is to present pleasure to my listeners, and this is what I strive for.’

“Does Shostakovich himself receive pleasure from any particular Western composers? ‘I like very many Western composers of the past,’ he says, ‘and feel that there are very many interesting and talented contemporary Western composers. To say that this composer is my favorite, well I can't say that. I like very many, and if I can express myself in such a fashion — from Bach to Offenbach.’ His play on words evokes laughter. ‘I think that if someone selects one composer for himself as his most favorite, that person impoverishes himself, because there are marvelous works of very many composers. I consider myself quite fortunate to receive so much happiness from communing with so many different composers.’

“Do these composers influence his work or the work of his Soviet colleagues? ‘Probably, but it's hard for me to judge. Probably Western composers influence Soviet composers the same way Soviet composers influence Western composers. To determine this very specifically is very difficult.’

“Is Shostakovich familiar with the Western avant-gardists? ‘Yes.’ Does he enjoy their works? ‘Not everything.’

“There was a time, during the Twenties and Thirties in particular, when he was considered something of an avant-gardist himself. In the words of *Pravda*, he wrote ‘a confused stream of sounds.’ Others took admiring note of his dissonances and often abrupt and daring rhythms. Then came his opera, *Lady Macbeth of Mzensk*, and the young composer was severely criticized for its being ‘un-Soviet, eccentric and leftist.’ That was in 1936. Twelve years later, he really came under fire, with the Central Committee of the Communist party calling his music, among other uncomplimentary things, an expression of ‘bourgeois decadence.’

“Since then he has, in the opinion of most critics, played it safe. The eternal question is, how would he have developed had he not gone the way of the State?

PROGRAM NOTES—*continued*

It is the last question one can ask the composer himself, particularly when one is interviewing him under the aegis of the State Department and the Soviet Embassy.

“Returning to safer territory, does Shostakovich adhere to any particular regimen while working? ‘If I am composing, I do it around the clock. Unfortunately, I have not been able to develop a regimen for myself. Sometimes I am asked, “What do you need in order to compose? Perhaps you have to go to the seashore.” Of course I’d like to go to the seashore, but if some sort of idea has come to your mind, you could sit in a dog house and be quite comfortable because everything is inside your head.’

“Shostakovich has an enormous catalogue of works including 15 symphonies as well as chamber pieces, choral works, concertos and film scores. Is there still in his mind an unfulfilled desire to compose something special? ‘I always dream,’ he says. ‘If any of my dreams cease, I’ll cease being a composer. The reason I compose a current work is that I’m unhappy with a preceding one. If I would say, “Well, this I composed beautifully,” then I’m finished as a composer.

“‘I like my works, not that I want that to be considered a lack of humility. But I also see their shortcomings. Before my arrival here, I completed my 14th string quartet. Each day I think of it, and already I see its shortcomings. When I return home, perhaps I’ll revise it.’

“Toward the close of the brief interview, Shostakovich, perhaps relaxed by the fact that the ordeal is soon coming to an end, relates what, for him, seems an expansive account of his feelings about music per se. ‘I feel the same way about music as I did in my childhood. I’m overjoyed within myself by the fact that I can listen spontaneously as any listener can. Then I can take a score and critically evaluate it.

“‘My musical activity began in such a fashion: In the neighboring apartment, musicians played often. My parents noticed that I frequently stopped in the corridor and leaned my head toward the door and listened for hours to how they played. I think I have the same feeling today. One must be professional, and yet at the same time not lose the spontaneity.

“‘I was always in a musical environment at home. My mother was a music teacher and my father sang. The first time I was taken to a theater, I was seven years old and heard *The Tale of the Tsar Saltan*. I was astounded by the sound of the orchestra. This was my first major ‘impression.’

“Shostakovich has often been described as a Romantic and, in this sense, has been likened to Gustav Mahler. Does he agree with the comparison? ‘For me this is very pleasant. I like Mahler very much. He’s one of my favorite composers.’

“The half hour is up, Mr. Orlov is quick to point out. And it is up, to the dot. But before we stop, is there anything more Shostakovich would like to say? ‘I’m very happy to come to the United States and have the opportunity to become acquainted with the musical life of your country. I’m very hopeful that this is not my last visit, and that I’ll come once again to the United States for a longer period of time. I’m sorry I can’t stay longer this time. I extend my best wishes to your readers.’”



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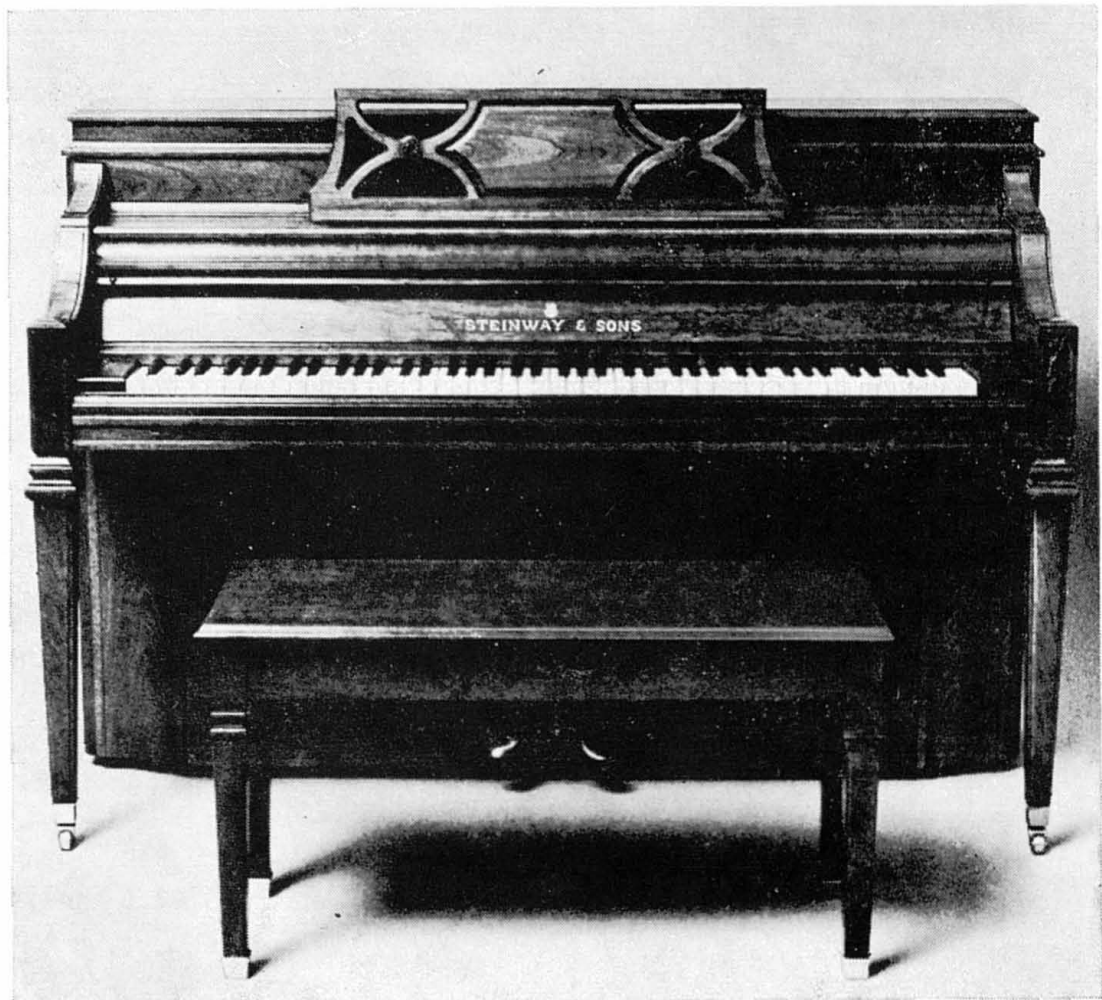
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